

NEWS RELEASE

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No strings attached! Jaime Affoumado, Arturo O’Farrill, Alex Blake and Bill Ware reunite as the Puppeteers on brand new Puppet’s Records

Puppet’s Jazz, the much-missed Brooklyn club, may have completed its six-year existence in May of 2011, but its afterlife has spawned both a substantial jazz quartet and a promising new record label. **The Puppeteers** reunites drummer and club founder **Jaime Affoumado**, pianist **Arturo O’Farrill**, bassist **Alex Blake** and vibraphonist **Bill Ware**, respected veteran musicians who logged in more hours together than they can remember on the compact bandstand of the former club. Now, officially known as the **Puppeteers**, the foursome have pooled their instrumental and compositional talents for a project that brims with the cohesion that sprouts from familiarity yet also bursts with the excitement of renewed commitment. The band’s self titled debut will be released on March 18, 2014.

The Puppeteers, as author Howard Mandel aptly states in his liner notes, deal in “fresh-jazz,” music that: “sounds like it just happened – not as “look-at-the-past” but as “here’s what-we-play-now.” It’s a group sound that assimilates the diverse influences that each of the band members willingly brings to the table; if the heady fragrance of hard bop, Latin, Afro-Caribbean and funk idioms can be detected, then the Puppeteers have done their job. The formative music that made each of these players who they are is honored before it is transformed into the new. Make no mistake; although the instrumentation of the two ensembles may be similar, this is not your father’s Modern Jazz Quartet. Drawing nourishment from the roots, yet grounding their sound firmly in the present, is the credo of The Puppeteers.

Individually, each member of the Puppeteers has a rich musical history. **Bill Ware**, an original member of the influential Downtown band, The Jazz Passengers also co-founded The Groove Collective and toured with Steely Dan for the Alive in America tour, 1993-1995. **Alex Blake**, who mans both acoustic and electric bass on the album, has long been associated with pianist Randy Weston, and has worked with such diverse artists as The Manhattan Transfer, Sun Ra, and the late saxophone master Stan Getz. **Arturo O’Farrill**, the leader of the acclaimed Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra, has also collaborated with a wide swath of important figures including Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis Carla Bley and Harry Belafonte. **Jaime Affoumado** has played with Jaco Pastorius, Arthur Blythe, and The Jazz Passengers, and, as the house drummer for Puppet’s Jazz, provided the groove for innumerable players who graced the club’s potent stage.

Each member of the cooperative contributes compositions, which range from percolating romps (Affoumado’s “Dreams of Dad,” O’Farrill’s “To Whom,” and Ware’s “Lonely Days Are Gone,” which borrows its chord progression from “The Letter,” the 1968 Box Top’s hit.) to easy grooving tunes (Blake’s “Peaceful Moments”). The only non-original tune, “Not Now Right Now,” introduced to the project by O’Farrill, is from the pen of trombonist Papo Vazquez, a former member of O’Farrill’s Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra. “Having every band member contribute tunes is important,” says Affoumado, “We are separate entities coming together. There’s a magic that comes from feeding off each other’s creativity -- I call it a calm shark fest.”

The album is being released on **Puppet's Records**, a new label that also takes its name from the fondly remembered club. The brainchild of Affoumado (the driving force behind both Brooklyn incarnations of the club) and attorney Dana Hall (manager of Bill Ware and the Jazz Passengers), Puppet's Records intends to create a resource for the work of the four featured players, and then expand to include up-and-coming artists from the worlds of new jazz, funk, and hip hop. "We've called it "Puppet's Records" not "Puppet's Jazz Records," states Affoumado, "We want to be open to all kinds of great music."

Although Affoumado acknowledges that the energy of the quartet is an outgrowth of the vitality that sprang from the club, he dismisses any talk of a fabled "Brooklyn Vibe." For him, "a vibe is brought to a musical situation by a person – not a place." However the magic arose, let's be thankful that the inspired atmosphere of a treasured club continues to live on in a fresh and vibrant band and an auspicious record label.

<http://www.puppetsrecords.com/>

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